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ABSTRACT

A project to develop a methodology to assess the impact of the priority requirements of the Health Professions Education Assistance Act (P.L. 94-484), Section 748 and 749 is summarized. Information on 21 schools of public health and 25 programs of health administration that received formula traineeship grants were utilized, and the evaluation was designed to test the effects of the priority requirements and traineeship monies on student characteristics and first postgraduate employment. The study design was based on the utilization of data collected through secondary sources: the Association of University Programs in Health Administration and the Association of Schools of Public Health. To develop project outcomes, traineeships who satisfied priority requirements were compared to those who did not. A comparative analysis of the two groups was conducted in regard to the following variables: age, sex, race and ethnic background, masters/doctoral students, part-time/full-time status, academic performance, discipline of students in schools of public health, students entering directly from bachelor's programs, previous baccalaureate degrees, students with three years of work experience in a health field, first postgraduate job setting, functional level of responsibility at first postgraduate job setting, and gross annual salary of first postgraduate job. The study indicates a need to assess such factors as differential financial aid award practices between types of institutions (e.g., public/private) and between priority and non-priority student recipients. (SW)

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Preface

The following document is the result of a collaborative effort of the Association of University Programs in Health Administration (AUPHA) and the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH). The project was sponsored by the Division of Associated Health Professions, HRA, DHHS. Project staff includes: Marcia S. Lane, Project Director; Mary Lou Licwinko, Associate Project Director; and Steven M. Sundre, Ph.D., Vice President of AUPHA. In addition, Donna English, the Project Officer, provided guidance and assistance throughout the course of the project.

The project staff would like to gratefully acknowledge the contributions of the project consultants: Thomas C. Dolan, Ph.D., Chairman of the Department of Hospital and Health Care Administration, Saint Louis University; R. Hopkins Holmberg, Director, Health Management Programs, Boston University; and Gerald St. Denis, Ph.D., Associate Dean, Graduate School of Public Health, University of Pittsburgh.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of the Contract

In 1976 Congress enacted the Health Professions Education Assistance Act (P.L. 94-484) which authorized the award of traineeship grants under Sections 748 and 749 to accredited schools of public health and other graduate programs in health administration, hospital administration, or health policy analysis and planning. Included in Sections 748 and 749 was the stipulation that a specified percentage of traineeship recipients at each school or program would meet priority requirements which closely paralleled recommendations made by the Commmission for the Study of Higher Education in Public Health established by the Milbank Memorial Fund in 1972. These requirements stated that for Public Health Traineeships:

> . . . each applicant shall assure to the satisfaction of the Secretary that at least the percent specified in paragraph (4) (45% in 1978, 55% in 1979, and 65% in 1980) of the funds received under this section shall go to individuals who:
> (A) (i) have previously received a postbaccalaureate degree, or
> (ii) have three years of work experience in health services. . .
> (P.L. 94-484, Section 748, Public Health Traineeships)

and for Traineeships for Students in Other Graduate Programs

> . . . each applicant shall assure to the satisfaction of the Secretary that at least 80 percent of the funds received under this section shall go to individuals who (A) have previously received a postbaccalaureate degree, or (B) have three years of work experience in health services. . . (P.L. 94-484, Section 749, Traineeships for Students in Other Graduate Programs)

Traineeship funds were distributed to schools and programs in direct

proportion to the number of full-time students plus part-time students (converted to full-time equivalents) enrolled in the previous year. Twenty-one schools of public health and twenty-five graduate programs in health administration and other disciplines have received formula traineeship grants under these general eligibility criteria.

Students enrolled in public health or health administration graduate curricula between 1978 and 1981 have benefited from traineeship support under P.L. 94-484. Academic programs enrolling such students have had sufficient time and experience with the formula grant mechanism and attending eligibility criteria, academic performace of traineeship students, career interest, employment opportunities and job placement incentives so that evaluation of the impact of traineeship support may be validly undertaken. In this regard, the Association of University Programs in Health Administration and the Association of Schools of Public Health were jointly awarded a contract to develop a mechanism for evaluating the effects of the priority requirements under Sections 748 and 749 of the Public Health Service Act on selected student and program characteristics.

Methodological Approach and Analytic Procedures

The mechanisms for evaluating the impact of the requirements that a major percentage of traineeship funds be distributed to students with a previous postbaccalaureate degree or three years health related work experience has been developed in the following three stages:

1) The methodology and approach for acquisition, compilation and analysis of information;

2) Plan for implementation of information acquisition mechanism and;

3) Plan for follow-up of graduates.

The study is designed to utilize information on the 21 schools of public health and 25 programs of health administration that have received formula traineeship grants under Sections 748 and 749 of the Public Health Service Act. An evaluation strategy has been designed to test the effects of the priority requirements and traineeship monies on student characteristics and first postgraduate employment.

The study design is based upon the utilization of data collected through secondary sources. Most of the data necessary to complete the project are contained in the data holdings of the Association of University Programs in Health Administration (AUPHA) and the Association of Schools of Public Health (ASPH), or can be readily accessed through routine information channels.

To develop project outcomes, the reported methodology includes the use of study and control groups. Study groups consist of students who received traineeships under Sections 748 and 749 and who satisfied the priority requirements. The control groups are comprised of students who received traineeships under Sections 748 and 749 and who did not satisfy the priority requirements. The study design proposes that a comparative analysis be conducted on the study and control groups relative to the following variables:

- Age
- Sex
- Race/ethnic background

- Masters/doctoral students
- Part-time/full-time students
- Academic performance
- Discipline of students in schools of public health
- Students entering directly from baccalaureate programs
- Previous postbaccalaureate degrees
- Students with three years work experience in health field
- First postgraduate job setting
- Functional level of responsibility at first postgraduate job setting
- Gross annual salary of first postgraduate job

As a complement to the analysis of the study and control groups, the project design includes a comparative analysis relative to pertinent variables of all recipients of traineeships and the overall student population of schools and programs receiving traineeships.

The original scope of the study is further enhanced by the addition of a secondary purpose to the project which is to examine the effects of traineeship award on policy issues and operational factors of study schools and programs. Data for this segment of the study will be gathered from schools and programs by means of an open-ended questionnaire and on-site visits. Based on these data, and attempt will be made to develop a typology of schools' and programs' policies and practices relative to the distribution of traineeship awards.

Discussion and Conclusions

The study represents the completion of the design of a methodology to

assess the impact of the priority requirements of the Health Professions Education Assistance Act (P.L. 94-484), Sections 748 and 749 on admissions, enrollment and related organizational processes of the programs in health administration and schools of public health receiving support. Attendant project outcomes involving the development of a plan to operationalize the study design and to assess career pathways which may relate to traineeship support have also been developed under this contract. The study provides the developmental framework and design necessary to test the assumptions that federal priority requirements: (1) create no admissions or recruitment barriers related to minorities, women and students entering programs affected by Sections 748 and 749 directly from baccalaureate programs; (2) promote greater academic and employment success for individuals receiving traineeships; and (3) enhance the numbers and availability of trained health management and public health career positions in national priority categories.

Additional features of the study design enable the answering of a series of policy and research questions of interest both to recipient programs and schools and to the Government. These policy and research issues span such topics as award patterns and practices as they relate to study variables and program/school characteristics, and evaluation of the use of traineeship monies as a career pathway determinent. It is the examination of these issues which will lend validity to the analysis of data pertaining to the student study groups.

In that the study provides for an assessment of policy and operational issues within health administration programs and in schools of public health, the exploration of the heterogeneous practices of

distributing traineeship money is featured in the development of the study methodology. For example, the possible use of traineeship money in combination with other university sources of financial aid will be examined. Preliminary discussion in the development of the study design has also pointed to the efficacy of analyzing award patterns within and among study schools/programs. Specifically, the study has been developed to consider such factors as differential award practices between types of institutions (e.g., public vs. private) and between priority and non-priority student recipients.

Gathering of data specified in study methodology will enable the analysis of a national sample which is homogeneous with respect to a major source of financial aid but heterogeneous in terms of previous work experience. The study will also provide for a unique basis of comparison of variables for health administration programs within and outside of schools of public health. The heterogeneous nature of schools of public health and award patterns within schools will additionally be assessed.

Career pathway differentials in administering health services which may relate to traineeship monies will be examined through the proposed study. For instance, the study has been designed to explore the relationship between traineeship awards and job types; the study will also attempt to assess whether traineeship students take lower paying community service positions with greater frequencies because of lower average debt than students not receiving traineeships.

Having now completed the first phase of the project, it can be concluded that the most crucial factor in successfully implementing the

second phase is securing the cooperation of study schools and programs in contributing to the study effort. It is recommended that in order to facilitate school and program participation, the second phase of the study should be timed to allow the expanded data collection activities of the associations to be carried out when schools and programs are most able to provide data, such as during the summer months. If this is not feasible, it is recommended that the second phase of the study allow an ample amount of time for collection of data to be carried out during the school year.